

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 06279

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, OX, US, UK

SUBJECT: US/UK TALKS ON INDIAN OCEAN

REF: STATE 85901

SUMMARY. MAY 19-20 U.S./UK BILATERAL TALKS ON INDIAN OCEAN WOULD BE TIMELY IN VIEW OF CONTINUING INTEREST IN PARLIAMENT IN INDIAN OCEAN IMPLICATIONS OF UK DEFENSE REVIEW AND IN U.S. ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA. AGENDA IN REFTEL APPEARS APPROPRIATE WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT OF SUBSTANCE WILL BE UK PRESSURE FOR POSITIVE U.S. POSITION ON POSSIBLE ARMS LIMITATION ACTIVITIES FOR INDIAN OCEAN AREA. END SUMMARY.

1. BASED ON OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH UK OFFICIALS AT SEVERAL LEVELS IN FCO AND MOD, WE CONCUR THAT SCHEDULE AND AGENDA SET OUT REFTEL WILL PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT BASIS FOR THIRD ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS ON INDIAN OCEAN. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT UK DELEGATION WILL BE AS DESCRIBED REFTEL. EDWARD DILLERY WILL BE EMBASSY CONTROL OFFICER AND WILL SERVE AS RAPPORTEUR. IF DEPARTMENT CONCURS, JOHN
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REED OF POLITICAL SECTION WILL ATTEND SELECTED SESSIONS.

WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT H.D. GELBER, CINCUSNAVEUR POLAD BE MADE A MEMBER OF U.S. DELEGATION. CINCUSNAVEUR HAS RESPONSIBILITIES IN A PART OF INDIAN OCEAN AND SHOULD BE REPRESENTED.

2. WE BELIEVE BRITISH WILL FOCUS MOST SHARPLY ON U.S. INPUT TO ITEM III ON ARMS LIMITATIONS. WHEN HMG ACCEPTED DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION IN PRINCIPLE IN DECEMBER, UK INTEREST IN ARMS LIMITATIONS WAS STRESSED IN PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENTS. SINCE THEN THIS ASPECT OF PROBLEM HAS, IF ANYTHING, INTENSIFIED. UK OFFICIALS HAVE NOT ONLY CONTINUED TO PRESS US FOR INFORMATION ON USG CONSIDERATION OF THIS QUESTION BUT WANT A CONCRETE U.S. POSITION ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXPANSION OF DIEGO GARCIA WOULD BE MORE / DEFENSIBLE IN PARLIAMENT IF MINISTERS CAN SAY THAT U.S. HAS PLANS TO DEAL WITH INDIAN OCEAN ARMS LIMITATIONS PROBLEM IN A SERIOUS MANNER. THEY WANT TO GIVE EVIDENCE THAT U.S. IS CONSULTING OR WILL CONSULT WITH THE USSR. BUT BEYOND THIS THEY FEEL THAT TIME HAS COME TO DO MORE THAN PROCRASTINATE ON THIS ISSUE, AND FEEL THAT U.S. CONGRESSIONAL SITUATION REINFORCES DESIRABILITY OF A REAL MOVE VIS A VIS SOVIETS.

3. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THERE IS NO ITEM IN AGENDA ON PLANNED U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN INDIAN OCEAN. ONE OF ORIGINAL PURPOSES OF CONSULTATIONS WAS TO ASSURE THAT UK WOULD BE INFORMED ABOUT U.S. PLANS FOR MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA. WE HAVE IN MIND THAT U.S. SHOULD BE PREPARED TO GIVE A STATEMENT OF CURRENT U.S. PLANS FOR DEPLOYMENTS BY SEVENTH FLEET AND PLANNED USE OF SINGAPORE.

4. U.S. USE OF MASIRAH STILL GETS OCCASIONAL MENTION IN BRITISH PRESS. MOD MASON WAS QUOTED ON SUBJECT FROM MUSCAT IN GUARDIAN APRIL 14. BUT OFFICIAL UK NEAR EAST/ INDIAN OCEAN COMMUNITY IS RELAXED AND WILL NOT, WE BELIEVE, PUSH US ON OUR PLANS. WE RECOMMEND THAT DELEGATION NOT RAISE SUBJECT OF MASIRAH BUT HAVE LOW-KEY REPLY PREPARED IN CASE BRITISH DO ASK STATUS OUR RESPONSE TO THEM.

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5. ON ITEM V - UK DEFENSE REVIEW - WE RECOMMEND THAT U.S. PRESS UK ON LATTER'S PLANS FOR SINGAPORE NAVAL FACILITIES. UK HAS NOT BEEN HELPFUL TO US IN OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE NEW ZEALAND MANAGEMENT OF SINGAPORE FACILITIES. WE SUSPECT THAT OFFICIALS HOPE TO MAINTAIN A SMALL RESIDUAL UK PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE UNDER THE GUISE OF LEASING FUEL STORAGE AND BERTHS FOR USE BY UK, U.S., AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. WE THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SMOKE THEM

OUT ON THIS ISSUE.

6. BRITISH UNDERSTAND ITEMS VII AND VIII IN DRAFT AGENDA WERE INCLUDED AT USG REQUEST. DURING U.S./UK TALKS ON THE GULF WHICH TOOK PLACE HERE APRIL 16 FCO ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY WEIR MADE IT CLEAR HE CONSIDERS IRAN-IRAQ AFFAIRS AND THE PERSIAN GULF TO BE PROPERLY IN HIS MIDDLE EASTERN SPHERE OF RESPONSIBILITY, NOT PART OF INDIAN OCEAN BUREAUCRACY AT FCO. SINCE U.S./UK APRIL 16 EXCHANGE FOCUSED LARGELY ON EXACTLY THESE TWO TOPICS, WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD BE CUT FROM AGENDA UNLESS THERE ARE SPECIFIC POINTS (OF A DEFENSE NATURE) THAT WERE NOT COVERED IN APRIL 16 TALKS.

RICHARDSON

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